

# Andover Newton Bulletin



JUNE, 1960

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## *The Urgency of The Personal*

CARLYLE MARNEY

This ceremony, I suppose, marks a parting of the ways. How grossly unfair it is that fourteen years from now some of you will be blaming Andover Newton for your ignorance and your provincialism. Fourteen years out, or earlier, a man must become responsible for his own ignorance because there will have been time enough and books enough and people enough and pain enough to teach him, if he will learn. Fourteen years out, he should have been able to forgive his teachers their trespasses and should have recognized that all any seminary could have given him is a set of tools with which to work. On his own, he should know the agony of this fragmented world of split-men who have worked under bright lights on their tiny islands, never sensing truly the surrounding illimitable darkness. He should have come to hurt for the hordes of sense-driven hive-dwellers who never will come to the tree in the midst of the garden. He should have been able to recognize how his Church and himself are very great sinners, how helpless he is really to reconcile, and should have drunk deeply at least once of the sacramental wine of his own failure. By the time of his maturity he should know the lack of seriousness in the charge that any real thinker must abandon the church, for he will have discovered that there is no other place to go! He would know, by then, that cynicism is homicidal, pride is an ego-mania, and nihilism is for sophomores. He should have had to weep over some village he is too small to take, but he should have outrun his own temptation to accept the call to be a bourgeois messiah. His grace for mankind should let him see that there are no seventeen year old anti-Christes, which gives him hope for the very young, at least; and, he should have begun to recognize his allies. He should have discovered that even "among those who map the roads to Inferno there sometimes is to be seen a glimpse of the Damascene highway"; that those of the great church at God's left hand know of the gathered darkness, too, and by their very negation they testify to the possibility that some morning waits to let in more light. He should have sensed that revelation lies behind and flows through the revolution that now occupies his world.

With all this maturity wrapped up in one package a man would be ready once more for Kant's "three questions": What can I know? What ought I to do? What can I hope? The answer,

for Kant, seems to lie in the context of reason and experience within a community of inquiry. Very well, I will work with this—a community within which inquiry can happen—and I have been inquiring—and no seminary could have given me all the answers. But have not we all been permitted to see a fantastic parade?

## I

Here you must forgive an old seeker's nostalgia, for I have seen the parade and am still a seeker. For ten seasons, when my children were very young, we went every spring to the corner by the Governor's Mansion to see the amazing crêpe paper and wire ingenuity of the Spring Parade at our University. After it had snaked its brilliant way by us we hurried down to Congress Avenue to see it pass again! Now, at my age, I have been a seeker thirty-five of my years, a Don Quixote and a mimic, but for twenty of these years I have been chasing theologians in this fantastic parade. I have small-boyed my big-eyed way into the marchers surrounding half a hundred exhibits, but the parade has gone full circle, some of the mimers and papier-mâché constructions are passing me again—and I have my bewilderments:

I saw Schleiermacher out the back door of my seminary eighteen years after Barth buried him. But great Schleiermacher did not die. He only went around the Chapel and went home, as Kant used to do at Commencement time, to keep from hearing some very bad sermons. Now Schleiermacher is coming back in the front door again, as indeed he must, for has Barth not replaced his bust in the lares of the gods?

My set of Harnack, imported, if you please, and paid for with grocery money, and my Troeltsch, and my Ritschl were passé, people said, when I got them. But you can buy Harnack for two dollars forty cents in paper-back and behold the timbers of Harnack, Troeltsch, and Ritschl lie visible in the base of Richard Niebuhr's methodology of Christian ethics, and the same great three can be felt in the prayers of Walter Rauschenbusch, now reprinted.

In my own life time as a seeker what was once Buttrick's heresy on atonement has become standard Presbyterian dogma, Harry Emerson Fosdick has gone a full and grand circle, Toy is revered at Louisville where he once taught, and Gezork has his host of friends in the South. The new Thomas Aquinas may have been baptized a German Protestant, Pelagius appears again among some educated Bishops, Plotinus moves lively now behind



the hundred or so pages of Karl Barth I have read: and Arius, who might have died sixteen hundred years ago if he had been properly appreciative of Bishop Alexander's preaching, is one ancestor to the flowering of New England. Ritschl's Christ, as having for Christians the value of God, rides, with a faint odor of Docetic Gnosticism in Bultmann's Trojan Horse, and the awful effort to evade the dreadful historicity of the Gospel requires a whole cavalcade of once thought dead Docetics to animate a three-storied view of history—a metaphysical device more complicated than Augustine's hermeneutics. Everybody is back now but Spengler and Hegel, and I am thinking that they never really went away.

Under Vespasian's edicts the Christians cried "Nero reborn!" but there are beneficent rebirths too. Augustine rides in a thousand exhibits. The fourth century heresy about the Father-Sufferer is at the bottom of any relevant modern soteriology. Unamuno recovers Marcus Aurelius and Kierkegaard. But by a fluke of a wild auto wheel we are denied the maturation of the new Bishop of Hippo, for the great North African, Albert Camus, is cut off just as he was climbing out of his Manichaeian phase. Only Julian Huxley remains the same. Everything else changes, and most have gone the circle route which must make the shade of Oswald Spengler happy. Except for Toynbee, who restores Heraclitus, and Butterfield, who sees that all great revolutions turn in on their own middle, the parade is a cycle and we are bogged in the traffic at the square, milling and turning. The parade has lost its form and has become a wild and vari-colored *mélange*. And even here a man keeps seeking, lest he lose the possibility of being found.

## II

For up and down in the sea of faces that was a parade but is now a *mélange* one senses the death of form that rested on Aristotle. There is no beginning—no middle—no end; no denouement, all edges blend, nothing cuts into new territory—no good, better, best; no cause, no order, no shape—but a *mélange*, a *fromage*, a milling, pressured gumming up of the parade. In this, with all its sociological manifestations, we are involved. Here we must live our ministry, not as spectators. And to admit the danger is no longer heresy. Here, in this *mélange*, with both Athens and Jerusalem lost, some things simply never mattered less! For our threat is not heresy, it is rather that we will choke on our own exhaustion, pile up on the circle, and quit looking for a new cutting edge.

Here, now, one begins to see, there never was an ordered parade with one exhibit following another. It has always been a *fromage vert*, a mixture in a cheese vat with all sorts of ill-assorted condiments floating together in the brew. There is no longer form, this is the end of entity, so you pick up Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury*, but you throw it down, startled, for this idiot, Benjamin, through whose mind there floats this hopelessly disconcatenated sequence of recollections, is no idiot at all—he is me! There is no beginning. One just falls into a mass without edges. No time, no shape, Aristotle has become Freud. The unconscious rules! Form is dead. So you find Hindu determinism in bed with Protestant theologians, Catholic authoritarianism in Baptist conventions, Fascism in PTA chapters, German racism in Junior Colleges and so-called Christian pulpits, an 1845 Southern theology in South Africa's Reformed Churches—you hear a jazz-mass, sit in a Gothic movie-house, find the Spirit of Greece in cemeteries, Nirvana in funeral homes, see a Swastika Cross painted over the Star of David, are served pineapple juice mixed with tomato juice in Dallas, find a Mohammedan “dial-a-prayer” wheel in a Baptist Church, and locate the best of primitive art in public rest rooms.

The power of the figure stunned me. Quentin, in *The Sound and The Fury*, on the day in which he was a suicide, broke the crystal on his grandfather's watch, then stripped its hands as if he would stop time, but the formless, handless monster, with its useless blood-stained face kept ticking out the droplets of his life. In this pressured *fromage* some things never mattered less. In a world that is eating out its innards in a revolution, could there be a revelation? The agonizing search for new symbols, or for new meaning behind the old, continues, and this is our “sole, common grief,” our “common weeping.” This is where a man comes “to eat the flesh of his own soul.” Here reason becomes, as Luther called it, “the great whore,” and a matricide, for love can die here! For, if, after half a life-time of searching a man can spell the names of mathematicians, physicists, theologians, and philosophers, but finds a home in neither Athens, nor Jerusalem, nor Vienna, nor Madison Avenue, may he not then be in position to find himself with no values at all, except the personal? And is this the door to his redemption, and a ministry?

### III

Is it possible that out of this *agon* there now emerges a clear and meaningful cry? I am profoundly moved by the agony in

which the church clings to its old frames in the face of this formlessness—this death of time. I am stricken dumb, between Sundays, at my own audacity that in a shape like ours I would actually climb my stairs and call to passersby about God when I am but a befuddled man. Is there any future for this and for us? I do not *know*, but that upon which I have staked my life finds its setting in which to work *with persons in a community of inquiry*. On this I believe a man can prove his claim to have been called to minister. Here I believe I can see an emerging hope that men can find some groves of trees in which to rest and work between their clawings at the “abyss” that threatens us with meaninglessness, for the future, any future, has always lain with the personal.

This is the distillate coming out of an aching center. This is not something you have to swallow hard and believe. “In the beginning is relation.” The only value we have is the personal-in-relation. This is the revelation, this is the center to which everything began years ago to point and which we can now see. Here we can come together in a community of inquiry with affection even for those who have hated that to which Jesus Christ was pointing. An amazing hope for persons in relation has come to me of late. To this, Gilson, Marcel, and the Jesuit Weigel are all pointing. Camus had turned this way, preceded by Paul Tournier, Martin Buber, and a holy, holy company.

When I tried to say these things once, a grand sociologist whom I have loved for years called it “magnificently romantic.” I answered in deep distress, “Doctor, do you mean ‘magnificently preposterous?’” For this is the surd: the unbelievable hope lies in this absurd; the future lies with the insignificant, with spirit and will, not with flesh and desire; with those who will hope and work, not with despair, or acquiescence in meaninglessness, or in the abomination of history. This is the surd: that the future should lie with Nels Ferré’s love, which I saw once on a postcard from London to a man in trouble, more than it lies with his thought which I have seen in books. This is the surd: that the future lies with the personal and the relation that can be recovered in the personal which is centered in today’s text, now belatedly announced:

I, if I be lifted up from the earth  
will go on drawing all men unto me.

This is what it is all about. It is not strange, is it, that Jesus Christ ahead of all the rest should ache so to see the personal recovered? But if and as it is recovered, doctors will know how to tell their patients they must die, and lawyers will become human,



and salesmen will lose their false faces, and pastors will foreswear every vestige of the professional, and men will become men to each other, beholding "thy face as if it were the face of God," and we will see men like the man described in the Sermon on the Mount, but not by a mere ideal.

There is a work of redemption to be done, and this Jesus Christ means to us Christians. He will do this work; he has done it; he is doing it. God has come to meet us in relation. Love will do this thing, and at this point the things which never mattered less go away, the parade has its lusty noises stifled, the traffic jam loses its frenetic pressure, we begin to hear voices, then each other, we recognize each other because redemption has come alive when persons in relation have begun to hear each other. And just here a man can become a Minister of God, if he will.

Senancour, in words dear to Unamuno, in *Obermann* cried out:

Man is perishable. That may be so; but  
let us perish resisting, and, if it is  
nothingness that awaits us, do not let us  
so act that it will be a just fate.

And this is the fantastic surd. That men may be so personal to persons that death is absurd. Every man who has heard you can be maintained—in relation. And this is why we can not ever escape or forget the Cross where he has heard us. If we should evade this relation to our suffering we would lose any relation to Resurrection and there would be nothing left for us but to go out to his grave in the night and howl, for there is where he gives us what we have to sing about. Here relation becomes actual and makes a ministry a possibility.

I first began to suspect myself of being a professional nineteen years ago, when clutching my brand-new ordination-gift prayer book I held my first funeral for a man I did not know at Fort Knox. It was an agony to hear myself making those pre-prescribed holy noises, but I did not then know about Cross, and one lifted up, and moments of relation and what it is to hear a man as he dies, and to die with him, if not for him. But I have tasted it now—And I decry the former emptiness. In such a man Christ does come to his people. In such a ministry a man can become all men. We do become as redeemers, frocked or not, and in this redemption of relation between persons and the Person, one can live.

Through that Thou, I am becoming a Person. And here an unique and unrepeatable event has happened. Here, in a new embodiment, a whole kingdom of hope and potential has begun



to be. This relation has its tensions, and this is suffering. It has its contradictions, and this is sin. It has its paradoxes, and thus it knows of death. But it has its interruptions in the form of new appearances, and its continuity which is eternal life, and in this person-in-relation a man can serve.

If this distillate is some kind of Christian humanism, it seems inevitable. For it is all we have. Let it be, or let God be declaring us all null and void. Our hope requires the recovery of the personal in relation. Nothing else in your work matters—much.

It is, I think, very unlikely that any of us will be theologians enough to help—much. There are good ones around and not many of us will qualify. But maybe we can be men enough—to help. So, go on with your work, but know that it begins and ends in relation between persons. There will be almost nothing you can do for or with your people except in terms of a discovered or created relation. If Savonarola himself were to preach daily, where I now serve, from eight until four, he would still be unable to do what that exciting church needs, except in terms of relation.

So, go on with your work. It begins and ends in relation between you and them and God. And lest you be tempted to use your skills and your people and your advantage, and your God, may you know early the shock of having to relate to men who have rejected you. If you can accept these and this you will be able to accept also the demands of the community of inquiry which grows within the "Commonwealth of Value," and thus may you taste in the relation between persons the glory of the kingdom of God with such gladness that you can sing of it, for your supper, without ever being a professional or ashamed of more than your own sin.

## *The Sound of The Bugle\**

*I Corinthians 14: 1-12*

ROY PEARSON

Have you ever wondered, as I have wondered, why the church has not made a greater difference in our common life? Forget the rest of the world for a moment, and think only about the United States of America. More than half of the people in this country belong to Christian churches. Presumably they are followers of Jesus Christ, and presumably they have committed themselves to spread his gospel wherever they go. But have you seen a newspaper lately? Have you read the gruesome record of murder and rape, of arson and robbery, of vandalism and assault? Have you shuddered at the stories of greed and hatred, of bigotry and vengeance, of treachery and falsehood? Have you found yourself disgusted as you glanced down the amusement pages and considered the level of culture they seemed to reveal? And then have you sometimes asked yourself why we Christians have not done more to straighten out the awful mess, why so few could do so much in the first century and so many do so little in the twentieth?

I think that Paul suggests a large part of the answer in his first letter to the Corinthians. He is writing about speaking in tongues, and he makes no attempt to put a stop to this strange, ecstatic, unintelligible babbling by which some of the Christians were expressing their excited devotion. "Speaking in tongues is all right," he says, "if you are addressing *God*. God can do all things: he can even understand speaking in tongues." But it was a wholly different story when you were addressing other *men*. Then you were speaking not *to* God but *for* God, and you were simply wasting your time if you did not so speak that your hearers found your words both understandable and convincing. After all, says Paul, "if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?"<sup>1</sup>

Not many Christians speak in tongues any more, but how much of the church's bugle-playing is still indistinct! The call that seems to start as "Reveille" quickly changes to "Taps." Or just when we think we have identified the summons to "Charge!,"

\*Dean Pearson's sermon will also appear in *The Pulpit*, and we appreciate the cooperation of that magazine in making the dual publication possible.

<sup>1</sup> I Corinthians 14:8

we recognize instead the call to "Retreat!" Or the notes are so cracked, so confused and so faint that they make no sense at all. "And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?"

## I

Consider, first, what the church has to say about God. By this I mean the whole field of theology—God himself, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, pain, sin, faith, prayer, the life after death.

There is no denying the fact that some Christians are far more positive about these matters than they have any right to be. As Henry Drummond put it, "All religious truths are doubtable. There is no absolute proof for any one of them."<sup>2</sup> As Gordon W. Allport put it, "The very comprehensiveness of the mature religious interest makes room for doubting. It is entirely possible for the mature person to be much less sure of his position than are many immature personalities who fashion blinders for their eyes, admitting nothing inconvenient."<sup>3</sup> So there is no denying the fact that some Christians are far more positive about these matters than they have any right to be.

But neither is there any denying that in many quarters today the church's bugle is giving such an indistinct sound that, far from summoning men to battle, it merely puts them to sleep. Does God actually exist? Well, the church can't be sure. Perhaps he does, and perhaps he doesn't, but anyway it does no harm to worship as if he did when you can live the rest of your life as if he didn't. Was Jesus the Son of God? Here again the church can't be positive. He was a good man all right, perhaps the best man who has ever lived, but when you speak about him as the Son of God, the church suspects that you are putting too much strain on common sense. The meaning of suffering? There really isn't any. Sin? The church would rather forget that word altogether. Faith? Not bad for women and children. Prayer? Worth a try if everything else has failed. Life after death? Nice thought, but you had better get all the pleasure you can out of your life on the earth.

Some of the fault at this point is certainly that of the church's ministers. The widening skies of modern knowledge have shown us the incredible immenseness and complexity of the world in which we live, and it has been a good thing for some of us ministers to be shaken out of our former complacency and compelled to face

<sup>2</sup> "Henry Drummond: An Anthology," Kennedy, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> Source unknown.



the vastness of our ignorance. But if we really mean it when we say that God is the creator and sustainer of everything that was and is and is to be, his revelation of himself in Jesus Christ has not been changed by modern knowledge, and the vacillation of much contemporary preaching is an inexcusable detraction from the church's strength. The discoveries of science do not degrade God: they exalt him. The critical study of the Bible does not destroy its foundations: it reveals them. But too uncertain of their own faith to see its deeper implications and too unaware of scientific procedures to understand their limitations, many ministers have given forth such indistinct sounds on their bugles that on the brink of victory they have called their people to retreat.

But if some of the fault is that of the church's ministers some of it also belongs to its laymen. I wonder how many of the church's laymen really believe much of anything, believe it enough to die for it, believe it enough to live for it. Do you believe, really believe, that God is not mocked and that whatsoever a man sows, that he also reaps? Do you believe, really believe, that Jesus rose from the dead? Do you believe, really believe, that it is your calling as a Christian to seek God's kingdom first, to deny yourself, to take up a cross, to love your enemies, to go the second mile and turn the other cheek? Do you believe, really believe, that God forgives sin and answers prayer, that the church is the body of Christ on the earth today, and that the two greatest commandments are to love God with all of one's being and to love one's neighbor as oneself?

If you don't, there is no excuse in saying that faith is like love, that it is something which you either do have or don't, and that if you don't, you cannot do anything about it. For although we speak of love as something into which we *fall* and thereby imply that we have no control over the experience ourselves, is there not a deeper sense in which being in love is not even possible until years of loyalty and faithfulness have built at last the comradeship we claimed before we knew what we were claiming? And when we turn to faith, is not belief as much the fruit of life as life is the fruit of belief—the fruit of study and prayer, the fruit of fellowship and service, the fruit of trusting where we cannot fully see and then finally seeing where we have not fully trusted?

We cannot escape it, can we? One reason why the church has not made a greater impact on the life of the world is that the church's bugle gives such an indistinct sound when it speaks to the world about God. Too seldom do we Christians know for sure what we are talking about. Not knowing surely, we cannot be-

lieve strongly, and not believing strongly, what cause have we to think that our halting affirmations will send a righteous host to battle?

## II

Second, turn to what the church has to say about man. By this I mean the province of ethics—right and wrong, good and bad, the purposes to which a human life may properly be given and the goals that none can seek without corruption.

Here again the church's bugle is making sounds that are less than distinct. When the bugle blares from the pulpit, the world could easily conclude that the church puts a very high value on man. Man is God's child, the bugle seems to be saying. God created him in his own image. He made him but little lower than the angels, and he crowned him with glory and honor. He gave his only begotten Son for man's salvation, and you could name the most unattractive person in the world and still not name a man whom God did not love as if he were his only concern.

But for every sound that the church's bugle makes in the pulpit, it makes a hundred other sounds in other places. It is bad enough when the calls from the pulpit are muddled, but it is even worse when the bugle splits its notes where the church spends most of its time—in home and factory, in office and school, in city hall and recreation center. Human life is priceless, we say, and when a Denver child falls ill of a strange disease, the planes take off from Boston with the doctors and the medicines to save it; but the Russians are expendable, and the best brains in this country must be bound to building better intercontinental missiles. Human life is priceless, we say, and when two young men are trapped on a mountainside, skilled climbers drop their work and travel hundreds of miles to rescue them; but Negroes are different, and they cannot be allowed to sit beside us in a restaurant or buy a house next door. Human life is priceless, we say, and when a woman murders her husband, the whole community is horrified; but "foreigners" are less important, and while millions of them face starvation, we spend about fifteen per cent more money on cigarettes and other tobacco products than we give to groups that could help them.

When Christians pledge all of their lives to the Prince of Peace and eighty per cent of their national income to the gods of war, the church's bugle is giving an indistinct sound. When Christians send missionaries to colored peoples overseas and then refuse to let their converts worship with them in the homeland churches, the church's bugle is giving an indistinct sound. When Christians say that Jesus was the Truth but still exclude him from the education

of their children, when they claim that they love their neighbor as themselves but still do their best to destroy him if he happens to be one of their business competitors, when they praise God as the Lord of all nations and peoples but still regard anything un-American as thereby unchristian—the church's bugle is giving an indistinct sound.

Is there no tragedy in the fact that the line between Christians and non-Christians seems to be disappearing? One could rejoice if he felt that the leveling had been upward, that the world had been getting better and better and hence that the distance between Christ and the world had been growing smaller and smaller. But has not the leveling rather been downward? There are more church members in this country today than ever before, and why? Is it not largely because church membership is less difficult today, less dangerous, less embarrassing? Membership in the church is something we can take or leave alone, and whatever choice we make, we know that it will not greatly matter because we do not expect to make any great changes in the church or to let the church make any great changes in us. Joining the church too frequently becomes not an enlistment for duty but a recognition of respectability, and the time is fast approaching when it will no longer be possible to speak of the church and the world as two separate entities, because the church is so entangled with the world and the world is so entrenched in the church that when the church speaks to the world, it is only talking to itself.

We cannot escape it, can we? One reason why the church has not made a greater impact on the life of the world is that the church's bugle gives such an indistinct sound when it speaks to the world about man. The church was meant to be a chosen people, a people summoned from the multitude, a people set apart for special proclamation and service. It was meant to prophesy. That is, it was meant to *speak for* God, to speak for him a word that else would not be spoken, and to speak that word for him with single-minded and transforming power. But all too often when the church has spoken about man's life on the earth, it has mumbled in its beard, and what cause have we to think that our halting affirmations will send a righteous host to battle?

### III

This brings us to the third aspect of the problem, what the church has to say about itself. By this I mean what the church thinks it sees when it looks in the mirror, what justification the



church offers for its own existence, what right the church claims it has to man's devotion.

It would not be unreasonable to expect that in this particular area there would be no confusion in the church and that the church's understanding of itself would be perfectly clear, but how the bugle notes are slurred and blurred! When I think about the testimony which so many of the churches bear to their conception of themselves, I find a multitude of pictures in my mind. I think about the literary critic, Dr. Hugo Twelvetrees Turner, of whom it was said that "he wanted to be all things to all men, that Turner was not only the proper, but the inevitable, name for him, that the corkscrew shaped his course, and that if he went around the corner he would run into himself on the way back."<sup>4</sup> I think about the records of one of our midwestern cities which showed that in the preceding year the city's children had swallowed gunbore cleaner, soldering flux, reducing pills, battery acid, furniture polish, lighter fluid, airplane glue, fertilizer, narcotics, tranquilizers, rubbing alcohol, hormones, after-shave lotion, camphorated oil, motor oil, iodine, toilet cleaners, laundry bleach, chromium polish, gasoline, kerosene, benzene, paint, wood alcohol, linseed oil, varnish, paint thinner, pesticides, cologne, and toilet water.<sup>5</sup> I think about that delightful cartoon in *The New Yorker* which showed an Oriental potentate sitting in royal splendor on a cushion in his palace, surrounded by dozens of the luscious ladies of his harem. But the great man is paying no attention to the beautiful women all around him: he is reading a magazine called *Playboy*, which features *pictures* of beautiful women.

Let me explain what I have in mind. If you listen only to its words, the church seems to have a very high opinion of itself today. It might be reluctant to make the classic affirmation that anyone who does not have the church for his mother cannot have God for his father, but apparently it stands in no doubt about its inescapable importance in the total Christian life. Christians must belong to the church, it says. They must attend its services of worship. They must come to its congregational meetings. They must support its programs with their time and money. The church is a holy institution, and every Christian must regard the church with reverence and serve it with faithfulness.

But consider how the church turns back on its own corkscrew and, going around the corner, runs into itself on the way back. For what important tasks does this essential institution

<sup>4</sup> "Portrait of a Literary Critic," Wolfe.

<sup>5</sup> *TIME*, 6/16/58.

demand its members' loyalty? Church suppers where macaroni casseroles provide a prelude to a travelogue about the South Sea Islands? Card parties where women pass an afternoon in the verbal slaughter of their friends, pay \$200 for the privilege, and earn \$10.13 for the church? Couples Clubs where crowds of gracious people gather for a Christmas dance and go away convinced that the town doesn't need a country club after all, since the church takes care of their needs so nicely? Attendance records where the contribution of the soul is less important than the presence of the body? Building programs where impressiveness is confused with sanctity and activity with service?

Do not misunderstand me. I am not speaking against church suppers or other social gatherings. I am not speaking against large congregations or new church buildings. But have not many of our churches become so eager to be all things to all men that they have swallowed a host of organizations and taken into themselves a multitude of activities that are no more appropriate to the life of a church than gunbore cleaner or soldering flux to the stomach of a child? Having all around them the possibility of actual spiritual fellowship, do not many of our churches confine their knowledge of that fellowship to what they read in books or what they hear from others' lips?

We cannot escape it, can we? One reason why the church has not made a greater impact on the life of the world is that the church's bugle gives such an indistinct sound when it speaks to the world about the church itself. The church is the body of Christ, it says: next Tuesday evening there will be an important meeting on table decorations. The church is the instrument of God's will, it says: at the next meeting of the Fireside Guild we shall have a fascinating talk on famous women golfers. The church is absolutely indispensable, it says: on the second Sunday in June the church will close until September. And if the church can do no better job than this in speaking of itself, what cause have we to think that its scrambled affirmations will send a righteous host to battle?

In his preface to "The Young Church in Action," J. B. Phillips says that the early disciples "did not make 'acts of faith,' they believed; they did not 'say their prayers,' they really prayed. They did not hold conferences on psychosomatic medicine, they simply healed the sick."<sup>6</sup> I wonder: is our failure to follow their example in some of these things one of the reasons why the church's bugle gives such an indistinct sound? And is this one of the reasons why the church does not make a greater impact on the life of the world?

<sup>6</sup> p. vii.

## *The Changing Scene in Missions*

ALFORD CARLETON

This subject is so big that I could talk forever, but I'm not going to do so. I want rather to get behind the topic assigned and ask, "What is the single great new fact in our time which has accounted for, or should account for, a new look in missions?" It is not only a new look in missions but a new concept of the world in which we live—a new perspective upon the world on the part of Christian people.

I know it is common to say that the world is smaller. It is easy to make that plain if you have ever traveled around the world. The most vivid evidence of the shrinking of the modern world is that you can now get on a plane eastbound from Tokyo at eleven o'clock in the morning and arrive in Honolulu at half-past ten the previous evening. And it *is* the previous evening. You have actually switched back the calendar. But really to say the world is smaller is the wrong way of stating it. The world in which we live has not gotten smaller. You can get around it a lot faster, but the world in which we live is much bigger. It is a far greater world than our ancestors ever thought of living in, bigger not in miles, but in problems, in complications, in people.

In a world that is smaller in distances, greater in problems, and changing rapidly, the single test which I would like to propose for our adequacy as Christians in the modern world is the degree to which we can get a perspective *as members of the Christian church in the world* and not look at questions just from the point of view of our denomination or our country. We must learn to think as Christians, members of a fellowship which is found all around this world and wonderfully represented here, in front of me today. Our ability to get out of our inbred and native provincialism of denomination or nation, or race, or language, and really to think as Christians in the whole world and to share effectively in the planning of the strategy that is involved in that concept is the biggest single test that lies before us as Christians at the present time.

Actually only a universal view will do from now on. The old concept of missions as something that we owned and we sent is gone, or ought to be. Anybody who thinks that way is out of date. Anyone who says any longer "our missions" (I am not speaking of theological distinctions; it is, of course "God's mission" not man's), or "our mission to Angola," is out of date—is living back



in the previous age. It is the "Christian mission in Angola." And I hate to correct my betters, but Mr. Dunstan was wrong when he talked about the American Board as having so many thousand national workers overseas. They are not *our* workers. We are *their* helpers, in their country, in the work of their churches. We are associated with a far larger body of Christians than the few that we send from America to help in the Christian enterprise. Well, I rub it in because this is part of the whole problem of re-orientation of our thinking. It is not "our" missions to "them."

I don't know how many of you have seen Leslie Newbiggin's pamphlet written about a year ago entitled "One Body, One Gospel, One World." It is a very powerful defense of the proposition that geography is completely irrelevant to the Christian enterprise, in the sense that there is no such thing as a home mission or a foreign mission. The home mission in Tokyo is foreign mission in New York. It all depends on where you are as you look out across the Christian world. The very concept of a foreign mission is theologically incredible except in the sense that we are all strangers upon this earth. There is no Greek, no barbarian, no Scythian, no Jew—we're one! Any less than this is in a sense idolatry. It is picking up the part in place of the whole. It is failure to recognize the importance of the change in our modern world.

And yet how easily we fall into the old pattern! I'm always irritated when I'm in Greece and one of my Greek friends refers to Christianity perfectly easily as "the Greek religion." (That is the phrase in Greek.) How many Americans will confuse "our" religion with the American way of life! One of the great mission boards received a check for \$3000 marked "for the propagation of the American way of life in India." They sent the check back and said, "Either you have made a mistake, or we should forward this check to Point Four." The gentleman who sent the check acknowledged his error and made the check over "For Christian work in India." It is so difficult to get out of these provincial points of view. We keep coming up to them in the American Board where we *think* we know better. While we are trying to teach others to do better, we keep relapsing in some form of speech, some terminology, some reference, that indicates that we haven't really learned we are Christians.

It is as Christians that we have this duty. We may also be Americans, or Indians, or Japanese for other purposes, but as Christians we are members of a church that simply knows nothing of race or nation or language or color. We are Christians together.

The marvelous fact is that there are Christians practically all over the world, and the wonderful new technological developments of communication make it possible for us to give and take, and think together and plan together and meet one another. There are problems involved, but that is the great possibility now before us.

Unfortunately the assets, the problems, and the resources of the Christian church are not equally distributed. I've been working just this last week on an address to be given next week on the proposition that the American Protestant churches face unequalled potential and peril as the most powerful bloc of Christians in the world. We forget that sometimes. It makes us awfully unthinking in our relations with other Christians. We forget how hard it is for a giant to be gentle. How easy it is to be overbearing when we think we are merely being generous! By contrast, think of the East Asia Christian Conference. I was out last May in Malaya at Kuatalumpur where they had the Assembly. All the churches were represented, except mainland China, from Japan in the north to Pakistan in the west. We were reminded in that gathering that there we were met simply as representatives of the Christian churches. The area of the East Asia Christian Conference is 5% of the land area of the world. In that area there lives 55% of all mankind—more than a half the human race! Yet in that whole area less than one in a hundred is a Christian. The distribution of resources is mostly on one side of the world as far as material and political power is concerned, and the resources of human potential lie on the other side. Remember also that over in that part of the world one half of the whole population is under twenty years of age. We haven't adjusted our thinking to that. We are still turning out endless literature for adults or for children, such as illustrated children's books. What about this whole half the population that is under twenty but no longer "children?" And theirs is the future!

One more illustration of the way we relapse into older ways of thinking on this. I don't know how many of you may have attended the Eastern Regional Meeting of the Congregational Churches in Hartford last October. One feature of that program was an address by Chester Bowles. It was a magnificent address, full of insight and strength and good will and Christian conviction, but it was perfectly impossible to keep track of the antecedents of the pronoun "we." "We" this and "we" that, "we" this, "we" that, all through the address, but "we" is sometimes "American," sometimes "Christian," sometimes "The Congregational Church," sometimes merely the people in the room. There was absolutely a

confusion of what he had in his mind when he said "we." It is perfectly all right in the Christian pulpit to talk about ourselves as American Christians and to discuss what our duty is as Americans, but we must always make it clear what the antecedent of the pronoun is.

There are interesting experiments going on in the effort to get over this disparity of resources and over the provincialism of our thinking. There is a Theological Education Fund, set up by the International Missionary Council, now totaling over four million dollars—which is a considerable sum of money as mission enterprises go. This four million dollars is put in the hands of a committee which has full authority to distribute it for purposes of theological education anywhere outside of North America and Europe. In the meeting last fall, near Paris, I was conscious that here was a group working together as I had never before felt an international group really pulling together as a team. My first explanation to myself was: "Well, after all, here are people of fourteen different nations, from Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, and Europe—but they are all experienced administrators and therefore they are accustomed to dealing with big budgets. These are men familiar with such figures; therefore we work well together." When I thought a little more, however, I realized something far more significant: these representatives of fourteen nations have rarely met before on the basis of a situation in which the money is already in the bank. Whether we like it or not, in most such ecumenical meetings the Asian and the African representatives are just hoping they can make a project look nice enough that it will get support from people who happen to have more money. And the representatives from Europe and North America, quite unconsciously, inwardly say, "We've got to be convinced before we put our money into it." It results in a "have" and a "have not" situation, a seeker and a potential donor situation, which can easily become patronizing. No one wants it that way, but it happens that way. Here in the Theological Education Fund, however, the money is in the bank, and therefore that international, interracial group work together as I never experienced before in such a meeting.

I was talking with D. T. Niles a few weeks ago, when someone in the gathering had referred to the "older" and the "younger" churches as bearing sort of mother and daughter relationship. D. T. Niles was right on his feet to say, "That isn't right; we're brothers; or brothers and sisters. We're not parent and child; we're all sons of God; we're all brothers." I went over to him



afterwards to say, "D. T., you're perfectly right. The trouble in all this discussion is that while we are brothers, even twin brothers, *one brother married a rich wife!*" We have to admit these problems; this is part of the understanding demanded of us if we are to look at the whole world as Christians. It is as much a problem of the Christian in Japan to help show us in America how to be stewards of our money as it is our responsibility to help the brothers in Japan to know how to Christianize their country. It is a common responsibility.

There are other complications we have to get over. For example, we have to get over this matter of recruiting staff on the automatic assumption that a missionary comes from the West. Fortunately there are now more than 200 Christian missionaries in Asia who are Asians and yet fully missionaries. The American Board has one member of its Near East Mission who is from Japan, and has just appointed another missionary nurse to the Near East from the Philippines. This is a process that has to go on so that the true international character of the staff of the Christian church may get above racial and national lines. There again we have our problems. We take it for granted that the English language is somehow the ecumenical language, and every meeting in the world is expected to speak it. That too carries its unconscious implication of the old imperialism in which the English speaking peoples were prominent. We sometimes make it worse by assuming that one of the canonical books is "Roberts Rules of Order," and that *our* way of conducting a meeting is the *right* one. Yet if the Christian church in Southeast Asia prefers to sit for two days before they open the question of any business, that's their way of doing business. Most important of all, we have to learn that the real strength of the Christian church is not in numbers, not in political influence, and not in economic power, but in the things of the spirit. The finest Christians of the world may be in the smallest churches—in Burma, Sumatra, Indo-China, Indonesia, Latin America. A Christian in the Congo these days has a great burden upon him to get over the idea that the power of Christianity is in numbers and strength and might. Power is in the spirit, and perhaps the finest Christian life is that which is lived under hardship as a minority in a persecuted situation. That is part of our task to learn.

One thing more: If we are going to live as Christians in the modern world, it is not a question: "Is there a future for missions?" That is not the question at all. It is not the question: "Will there be a Christian *mission* in China?" The question is "Will there be

Christianity in China? Will there be a Christian church?" The basic task before us is to learn to think in the inclusive sense as Christians living in one world, in real partnership, in brotherhood with Christians everywhere—giving of our strength and receiving where we have need—as all being children of God together.

# *The Changing Scene in Evangelism*

HARVEY COX

In his remarkable book *Young Man Luther*, the psychologist Erik Erikson tells about the trip the young Luther made to Rome in 1510 at the age of twenty-seven. Luther's diary for that trip reveals that he completely missed noticing any sign of the Renaissance. He remarks about the elegant ancient aqueducts, about the church-operated hospitals and orphanages, but seems never to have been struck by the paintings, sculpture or the spirit which to us today seem so clearly to have signaled the birth of a new historical period.

In 1510 Luther was a medieval man with a medieval world-view, even though the Renaissance was in full blossom around him. Erikson goes on to make this telling observation:

It takes time, especially for deeply preoccupied people, to comprehend the unity of the beginnings of an era which later will be so neatly classified in history books. (p. 175)

When we as churchmen ask "What is the mission of the church in our time?", we ask it as deeply preoccupied people. We are thus perhaps congenitally least able to appreciate the radical newness of the context in which we minister. We have a vaguely troubled awareness that something is going on around us whose scope and dimension we only dimly discern. We live as modern men at the dawn of the post-modern age. The "scene is changing" and, as when in the world of the theatre the scenes are changed, it means a new act is about to begin.

Our suspicion that we stand at the beginning of a new phase in human history finds support in the perceptive voices of our time. Guardini and Tillich say it is the "modern age" or the "Protestant era" which now draws to a finale. More seriously, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German pastor-martyr, writes of a world which has "come of age," has outgrown religion itself. Martin Heidegger insists it is not just the modern period, but the whole western epoch which began with the Greeks, that is now over.

A new age is symbolized by a "new man," a new identity image. Here the modern seers grow confused. Who is this post-modern man? We cannot tell. We see him more now for what he is not than for what he is. As Hendrik Kramer says, basing his description on Camus' *The Rebel*, he is post-individual, post-moral, post-religious. In short, he is a living embodiment of everything

the religious, bourgeois individualistic man of the classical Protestant period is not.

What shall we say to the heralds of a new era? It can be one of three answers. And the answer we give makes a crucial difference to evangelism. We can say, as many of us do, that they are wrong, that the world in which we are living is essentially the same as the one into which we were born. We can persist as modern men in a post-modern age to the puzzlement of future generations, who will wonder how anyone could have misread the signs of the times so obtusely.

Or, if we choose, we can listen to the warnings and believe them, as most of us do, but continue to act as though nothing were different. This appears to be at once the most anomalous and the most popular alternative.

The third possibility is the most awesome, but in my view the only authentically responsible one. It sees the paradox underlying the way we ask "What is the Church's mission in today's world?" It sees that this is a question asked by an institution, the church, whose vocabulary, organizational forms and style of life grew up in one age, about how it relates itself to a world whose whole life style and self-understanding is increasingly informed by the new age.

If we choose to believe the new voices and to live as a church in the emerging post-western era, then we must ask the most basic question of all: How can the church now die to itself in the old body that God may—by his grace and if he chooses—resurrect it to live in the new?

The question is a vexatious one. But God has not left us to figure it out alone.

The spectacular new interest in biblical studies and the growth of ecumenical theology have come, providentially, just at the outset of a new chapter in the history both of the church and the world.

We have been reminded especially of three rich truths about the church's commission which had lain idle over many years. First, the World Council's study commissions have helped us recognize anew that Jesus Christ is Lord not only of the church but of the world. In fact, he is present for his church *in* the world, and his people find him and serve him only as they do so *in* the world.

Secondly, the exciting emphasis on the ministry of the laity has forced us to recoil from a grave non-biblical distortion of our view of the ministry. We now see in a fresh way that Christ



shares his ministry with his entire church, and that the ministry of the laity within the life of the world should be the central focus.

Thirdly, we have been forced by the ecumenical conversation to strip away the cultural addenda and look once again at the essential nature of the church. In the hard light of its biblical calling, we see the church again as *laos theon*, as a servant people of a Servant God. We have been shaken to realize how far the church had strayed. We see again that its *sole* reason for existence is to make known God's love in Christ. As burning is to fire, so is mission to church. It has no other nature.

The striking feature of this ecumenical renaissance is that these three insights, on the church and its ministry and on the presence of Christ in the world, correlate so naturally with what we can know about the new-emerging age. The remainder of this paper will endeavor to demonstrate the character of this historical and theological reciprocity. It will attempt to show how the "answering theology" of the church meets the most salient features of the erupting new epoch.

#### 1. *The Post-Moral Man and the Church as Mission*

The new man has been called "post-moral." Perhaps a more precise designation would be post-moralistic. The world no longer conceives of moral principles as absolutes, but as functions of a particular historical period, class outlook or psychological stance. As citizens of this age we have seen some of our dearest "Christian principles" unmasked by Freud and Marx as merely "western," or "bourgeois," or even "Victorian." Reinhold Niebuhr has instructed a whole generation in the degree to which the strategies of our own personal and national self-aggrandizement are subtly baptized as altruistic virtues springing from God's holy will. A communist revolution and a rising of the colonial peoples have been necessary to convince us that the gospel, which seemed so universal to us, had within it components which to some people smacked of capitalism and imperialism. We can hardly blame these people for failing to distinguish between the essential gospel and its white-western caricature when we remember that this is a distinction most Americans still find difficulty in seeing.

We live in a world which can never again look an absolute moral principle in the face without asking for its ideological credentials. In this world of competing relativisms, what can the church do? Should it cling with increasing ferocity to its cherished "principles," many of them spawned in a robust period of frontier individualism, and decry the "moral collapse" around it? This has been the posture of the dying remnant of every *ancien régime* in

history. Or should it thrill to the realization that the Christian gospel is *not* the summons to a particular moral code at all—but a living enactment and announcement of God's forgiving deed in Christ. It is a reconciling Word addressed to moral cynics and ethical absolutists alike, a Word which finds all our ethical pretensions filthy rags and reconciles men to each other with no reference to their level of moral attainment.

The church which sees its task as mission, as message, as evangel does not stake its life on any particular ethical system. Rather it lives in the world, and speaks and sings, freed from the divisive tyrannies of competing moral absolutisms, freed from "bondage to the law." It is free to love as only those who have first been loved unconditionally are able to love.

Karl Barth says the church is the "provisional demonstration" of God's new humanity. It acts out in the world what God has done. This life from God is its only life; this mission its only mission. Thus evangelism is not one of a catalog of activities, required or elective, but the church's *raison d'être*. It is a people whose total life, in every responsibility and in every relationship, makes known this fact: that God has constituted a new humanity where social, racial and ethical hostilities have been abolished. Thus the church is that part of the world where God's hidden deed in Christ is made visible, tangible, audible and evident.

In short God has reminded us through the course of contemporary history, as he has so frequently done in the past, that the church is not called to be the judge of the world. There is one judge, who judges both church and world. His people share deeply the tensions, the pain and the longings of the world, but are never defeated or captured by it. If through their life of concern for sinners God judges the sin, it is his judgment, not theirs. An age which has found its moralisms slanted and contradictory needs not a law but a gospel. It calls for a church willing to enter every concrete human crisis and struggle there for whatever reconciliation and justice can be wrung from the situation itself.

## 2. *Christ in the World and the Post-Christian Era*

The church's willingness to plunge into radical solidarity with estranged human life arises from its confidence in the second of the newly rediscovered truths of biblical faith. That Jesus Christ is present in the world helps us know how to live faithfully in a post-Christian era.

By "post-Christian" our modern seers mean that we now live at a time when the basic issues and most profound questions of human life and destiny are no longer framed in the language of the

classical Christian tradition. No longer do a Dante and an Aquinas, one a poet, the other a theologian, share the same conceptual framework. Even the more recent paradoxical relationship of a Jonathan Edwards and a Herman Melville to the same awesome Calvinist world is now gone. Order has broken down while various world views compete for mastery. Christians now for the first time since the earliest centuries begin to live as a minority.

At this crucial juncture, as the *corpus Christianum* breaks up around us, as "western Christendom" melts into an international technical society, we are again affirming that it is in the *world* that Jesus Christ is at work, redeeming and renewing.

Again Dietrich Bonhoeffer has said it well. He wrote toward the end of his life that we must remember it is the *world* which has been altered by the Cross and Resurrection, not just our inner lives. Since the Incarnation, he insists, the believing man does not have to look back and forth in agonized hesitation between God and the world. He need not try to "apply the one to the other," as though the atonement had never occurred. For "since the event of Jesus Christ, we cannot look at the world without seeing God, or look at God without seeing the world."

Christ is present for his church in the world. The movement toward him is a movement *toward* the world, not away from it. As the writer of Hebrews has put it:

Jesus suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own blood. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing abuse for Him. (Heb. 13:12,13.)

Markus Barth in an article in the *Scottish Journal of Theology* (Vol. XII, No. 1, pp. 32 ff.) argues persuasively that Jesus' own baptism was not a separation or withdrawal from the world, but an entering into solidarity with those who have nothing to confess but sin. It was a rejection of the mediated religion of the temple and a public attestation of what God had done for all men in Christ. In our own baptism we declare not our separation from sinners but our oneness with them and God's love for them and us.

Likewise in worship we affirm God's presence in the world. Though he discussed it in terms of the "real presence of Christ in the elements," Luther's polemics, as Vilmos Vajta indicates (in *Luther on Worship*, Muhlenberg 1958), really grew out of his belief in the omnipresent God. "The Incarnation was the real offense." He insisted on Christ's real presence in worship against the Catholics, who attributed it to a priestly miracle and the enthusiasts who located Christ in the heart of the believer. For Luther,

Christ was *already* present, regardless of priestly liturgy or the level of our inner religiousness. Nor do the elements change into something else (as in transubstantiation), for Christ is present "in, with and under" the elements. And his presence at worship, made evident by the Word, opens our eyes to his presence in the world, where he had previously been hidden.

Thus, Christ is present in the world for both believer and non-believer. But for the believer he is revealed as Saviour, while for the unbeliever, though he still saves, he is hidden, understood at best as Creator or Judge. He is there whether we have faith in him or not, and before any religious words are spoken. He has chosen to be with us. Nor does he change the world into something it is not by his presence. It is still politics, still education, still business. He is there—in, with, and under the essential forms of the world. The manner of Christ's presence in worship thus opens our eyes to the way he is present in the world. He is there because he has chosen to be there, not because our piety or ceremonial bring him there. He was in the world before we were and will be there when we are gone.

Both baptism and worship point to a Christ who is known only in the world. And "world" as it is used in biblical language is not a spatial term. As Ernst Troeltsch says, ". . . it is not a cosmological conception at all; it is a term composed of political, social, and economic elements." As Rudolf Bultmann says, the New Testament uses "world" to refer not to the stage, but to the actors in the drama of history. The church must find its Lord in the secular world.

Somehow we have reduced the dimensions of the Christian claim. We have taken the earliest Christian affirmation "Jesus Christ is Lord," a confession which expresses the exultant sweep and cosmic scope of God's deed, and substituted for it the pietistic diminutive "I accept Jesus as personal Saviour." Though the latter phrase is insisted on most tenaciously by those who claim to be closest to the Bible, the phrase itself never appears in the New Testament, and there is little scriptural justification for it. It reduces the astounding claims of the Christian message to the manageable dimensions of an inward individualism.

Christ is present in the world, whether or not we happen at this moment to feel his presence in our hearts. We do not carry him to the world somehow previously devoid of his presence. We meet him as he calls us to him in the world where he is already.

Thus Christ's presence in the world he loves does not cease because of a recession in the number or the piety of believers, or



the passing of a style or religious language. Jesus Christ survives the post-Christian era because he does not need our theological formulations to conjure him into existence. The passing of the language of Zion merely means we must learn to speak to the world in its own terms. This means that we must listen, for Christ speaks to the church in the language of the world. Only when we have learned the world's language can we speak again of Christ. The world, its character (since Christ), its meaning, its destiny, becomes the *content* as well as the *context* of our speaking. As D. T. Niles says, "to have a conversation with God, we must know something about the world. It is the only subject He is interested in."

### 3. *Post-Individual, Post-Religious and the Ministry of the Laity*

Taking the problems of the world seriously, loving it and learning its language—these all point to the third and perhaps most important of the recent theological insights, the ministry of the laity. The lost battle cry of the Reformation, "the priesthood of all believers," has been found again in a sharply focused way. We have begun to see the ministry of the laity, not as a "religious task" in any institutional sense (it has nothing to do with ushers and acolytes), but as a ministry of reconciliation and witness expressed in political, occupational and intellectual terms in the secular world itself. This permits a non-individualist view of conversion. A man's conversion to Christ does *not* involve his *removal* from the interaction nexus of secular society. (This is what George MacLeod has condemned as "extraactionist conversion.") It is rather the transformation of his whole way of living within the relationships of society. It is not the conversion of an "individual," thought of as in abstract isolation from society. Rather it is the transformation of a "person," of one sector of the *culture's* complex relationships as they are consciously lived and uniquely styled in the experience of a particular human being. To be converted is not to add one more responsibility to the ones we have already; it is to fulfill the ones we have in a new way.

Modern man grasps his identity through his personal style of life. But the identity he grasps is mediated to him by constant interaction with his society, his family, his work, his community. Thus the achievement of a personal identity is a *social* phenomenon. The "new life," or "new self," which is the gift of God in Christ, is likewise a social self. Conversion too is a social process. It is just as impossible to be a Christian merely inwardly as it is to be a father, employer, or citizen inwardly. All these are social-relational designations, hence Pascal's famous dictum, "an individual Christian is no Christian."

But if our new vision of the ministry of the laity answers the problem of a post-individual age, how does it relate to a post-religious era?

Here Christians can only say that the post-religious era began with Christ himself. "In his body on the cross, he abolished the law of commandments and ordinances." The wall broken by Christ is the wall between the religious and the secular. If the "religious era" marked a period in which there existed a special institution, vocabulary, and way of life set apart from the mundane everyday world, then we are well done with it. The crucifixion was a secular event and the people who are called by God to live their life under its power inhabit the everyday world. Philip Maury is right when he says "politics is the language of evangelism."

Thus the ministry of the laity is not a "religious ministry" in the ecclesiastical sense of the term. It is a relational, reconciling ministry expressed within the secular matrix of the world. It is the *only* ministry truly relevant to the post-religious era. The clergy's job is not primary but derivative. Its only significance is drawn from its service to the primary ministers, the laymen. The clergy serve as "ministers to the ministers," as "kitchen troops in the divine army" (to use Hans Rendi Weber's simile). And kitchen troops should be court-martialed if they confuse the fighting men, either by adjuring them to spend more and more time in the mess hall, or by implying repetitiously that the only truly military job in the army is that of kitchen officer, while the rest are not really "full-time."

The changing scene demands a new stratagem in evangelism. Can the church change? Can it meet the post-modern man by living out through its laity the mission with which the Christ who lives in the world has commissioned it? The obstacles are formidable. The familiar ways of our fathers are comfortable and, if increasingly irrelevant, still secure. The new world is frightening and untried. But God's voice calls us away from the familiar: "Get out from your own country and from your kindred and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you . . . and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

## Recent Publications in the Biblical Field

NORMAN K. GOTTWALD

### TEXT

Norman H. Snaith has prepared a new text of the Hebrew Bible (The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1958). Since its critical notes are virtually nil, it does not replace the basic Kittel edition. A revised and enlarged edition of Sir Frederic Kenyon's *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* (Harper, 1958, \$6.95) brings the original work up-to-date, particularly on such matters as the secondary ancient versions (e.g., the Arabic and Ethiopic) and the Dead Sea Scrolls. This is the best general volume on the subject.

From the Gnostic library discovered near Nag Hamadi, Upper Egypt, in 1945, the Coptic texts of *The Gospel According to Thomas* (Harper, 1959, \$2) and *The Gospel of Truth* (Abingdon, 1960, \$4) are available in English. The former has been prepared by a team of five scholars, who will eventually publish an introductory volume with extensive notes. In the meantime we have their judgment that the gospel is based on a Greek text from about A.D. 140 and that it may well preserve some genuine words of Jesus heretofore unknown. The latter is a translation and commentary by Kendrick Grobel, who believes that this Gnostic "meditation on the gospel" was written by Valentinus shortly before A.D. 150. For New Testament textual and critical studies the Gospel of Thomas has an importance not matched by the Gospel of Truth.

### HISTORY

Students of the Old Testament are fortunate to have John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Westminster, 1959, \$7.50), which has effectively replaced Oesterley and Robinson as a student handbook, and which admirably supplements the recent English translation of Martin Noth's *Geschichte Israels*. Bright's book is extremely well written and excels the other histories in its assimilation of archaeological, cultural, and literary details within the basic story. The influence of W. F. Albright is acknowledged by the author, but the student has less of the former's dogmatism.

The last work of Johannes Weiss, *Earliest Christianity. A History of the Period A.D. 30-150*, which appeared in 1914, is still rightly described "as one of the two or three most important treatises ever written on the subject." Long out of print, the English translation is now reprinted as a Harper Torchbook (1959, Vol. I, \$1.95; Vol. II, \$2.25).

## ARCHAEOLOGY

Heretofore the only comprehensive sourcebook of ancient documents paralleling the Old Testament was the large and expensive anthology edited by James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. A condensation of that collection has been prepared with the title *The Ancient Near East* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1958, \$6). Similar in nature is *Documents from Old Testament Times*, ed. D. Winton Thomas (Nelson, 1958, \$5). The Pritchard condensation is somewhat more comprehensive and the illustrations are superb. On the other hand, the fuller introductions and notes in the Thomas anthology are a real advantage for the student.

The popular book by the University of Chicago Orientalist, Ira M. Price, *The Monuments and the Old Testament*, is now thoroughly revised by Ovid R. Sellers and E. Leslie Carlson (Judson, 1958, \$6.75). In *The Antiquities of Jordan* (Crowell, 1959, \$4), G. Lankester Harding, Director of Antiquities for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, expertly describes the archaeological sites and museum treasures in his charge. It is a virtual Baedeker, and every traveler to Jordan is well advised to take a copy with him. The popularizer of Palestinian archaeology, Nelson Glueck, has produced an exciting sketch of the history of the occupation of the southern desert of Israel which his explorations have revealed in the last six years. *Rivers in the Desert. A History of the Negev* (Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1959, \$6.50) indicates that by means of primitive irrigation methods sedentary life in the desert was more common, even in biblical times, than previously thought.

## INTRODUCTIONS

Among the floods of general books about the Bible, Otto Weber, *Ground Plan of the Bible* (Westminster, 1960, \$3.95) deserves special comment. It has the terseness and splendid organization of a good reference book. Its index of Main Biblical Ideas will give it the usefulness of a Bible workbook. Weber moves so directly to the content of Scripture and refers so pointedly to its central passages that it will be difficult for a reader to resist the temptation to read the Bible for himself—a challenge not always evident in such introductions.

A brief modern critical introduction to the Old Testament has long been lacking in English, something far less compendious and compilatory than Pfeiffer or Bentzen but still reliable on the key historical and literary issues. This deficiency is made up ad-



mirably in the Studies in Theology series with the appearance of George W. Anderson, *A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament* (Allenson, 1959, \$3). A somewhat similar function for the New Testament is served by the revised and enlarged edition of Archibald M. Hunter, *Introducing the New Testament* (Westminster, 1957, \$3), although Hunter's work is less technical and assumes less knowledge of biblical criticism.

Modern theologies of the two Testaments have been slow to appear in English. In the last three years the dam has burst, owing partly to the translation of several foreign language works and partly to the awakened interest of English-speaking scholars in biblical theology.

The Old Testament has benefited particularly from this burgeoning concern with the unity of biblical faith. Edmond Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Harper, 1958, \$5) and Ludwig Koehler, *Old Testament Theology* (Westminster, 1957, \$4.50) have striking similarities in scope and organization and share the same attitude toward the discipline of Old Testament theology: it is a historical discipline of a constructive and systematic character. By way of contrast George A. F. Knight, *A Christian Theology of the Old Testament* (John Knox, 1959, \$5) and Th. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Branford, 1958, \$7.50) share the conviction that Old Testament theology, as written by a Christian scholar, must set forth the inner structure of Hebrew faith on the basis of a Christian conviction about the unity of the divine purpose in both covenants. Both, however, sharply reject pre-critical "Christological" or "typological" interpretations. They seek to show that there are fundamental patterns in the Old Testament view of God and man which are normative for Christian faith. Knight has valuable discussions of the Hebrew notion of "the image of God" and of the leading eschatological themes of the Old Testament. In devoting a third of his book to the Old Testament as the Word of God, its function as Christian Scripture, and its "spiritual structure," Vriezen has made a notable contribution to the literature.

Not on the scale of any of the foregoing, but helpful as a companion to his *Introducing the New Testament*, A. M. Hunter has written *Introducing New Testament Theology* (Westminster, 1959, \$2.50). Its chief value to the minister is as a stimulant or model for a lay education program in New Testament faith. One of the most exciting and significant works of New Testament theology to appear since Bultmann's *Theology* is Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* (Harper, 1959,

§5). The modesty of the title should not mislead; it is a substantial contribution which takes very seriously the unity of Scripture—so much so that it is as much as one-fourth to one-third devoted to the Old Testament roots of New Testament thought. It is constructed thematically in the belief that there is a unity to the apostolic view of God. Some readers will feel that there is a tendency at times to argue unity of New Testament thought without clear purpose, but the over-all brilliance of the study is unmistakable and the writer's control of the biblical material is impressive.

#### SPECIAL STUDIES

In *Sex and Family in the Bible and the Middle East* (Doubleday, 1959, \$3.95), the Israeli anthropologist, Raphael Patai, illuminates Old Testament attitudes by the use of general Semitic parallels. William G. Cole, *Sex and Love in the Bible* (Association, 1959, \$6.50) examines sexual attitudes and practices in the Bible against the backdrop of current thought, concluding with a vigorous defense of an attitude of "responsible freedom" in sexual matters as the only way out of the present vacillation between libertinism and moralism—both of which are based on a failure to see the contextual and personal character of sex. Neither volume will replace the careful study of David Mace, *Hebrew Marriage*, but they supplement it in significant ways. Cole's book is particularly to be recommended to Christian parents and teachers.

A trenchant analysis of a complex and often neglected subject is offered by A. S. Hebert in *Worship in Ancient Israel* (John Knox, 1959, \$1.75; Ecumenical Studies in Worship No. 5). It provides the basis for a minister's re-evaluation of public worship and contributes to a better understanding of the biblical notions of priesthood and sacrifice. In *The Exilic Age* (Westminster, 1957, \$3.50), C. F. Whitley discusses the crucial impact of the sixth pre-Christian century in shaping the life and thought of ancient Israel. There are chapters on the three great exilic prophets: Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah. Sheldon H. Blank, *Prophetic Faith in Isaiah* (Harper, 1958, \$3.75), is the fruit of life-long interest in the book of Isaiah, from which the author selects portions for closer study (e.g., the Immanuel prophecy, the explicit monotheism passages of chapters 40-48, the Servant Songs).

Former students of Professor James P. Berkeley, emeritus, of Old Testament at Andover Newton, will give an especial welcome to his *Reading the Gospel of John* (Judson, 1958, \$3.75), a work indicative of the broad range of his interests in biblical studies and religious education. William Strawson, *Jesus and the Future Life*

(Westminster, 1959, \$3.95) is a sober exegesis of the views of Jesus on heaven, death, judgment, the fate of the lost and the destiny of the saved. It will ably fill a serious gap in the existing literature. The reader who grapples with Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind* (John Knox, 1959, \$6) will find an arresting and closely-reasoned challenge to the too-simple view that Paul was a universalist at odds with Judaizing particularists in the early church. He finds Paul more particularistic and the Jerusalem church more universalist than usually granted. Munck is even able to argue that there was no connection between the Jerusalem church and the Judaizing Gentile Christians of Asia Minor.

#### INTERPRETATION AND THEOLOGY

A superb biblical wordbook, prepared by thirty-six French and Swiss Protestant scholars, has been translated as *A Companion to the Bible*, ed. J. J. von Allmen (Oxford Univ. Press, 1958, \$6). It admirably supplements Alan Richardson's *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*. The minister who thoroughly studies the relevant articles whenever preaching or teaching biblical themes will have a sound compass in hand.

Suzanne de Dietrich, a "lay theologian" long active in the World Council of Churches, has written a vigorous exposition of the biblical concept of the people of God, *The Witnessing Community. The Biblical Record of God's Purpose* (Westminster, 1958, \$3.75). It will serve admirably as a text for bible study groups. In 1938 Sigmund Mowinckel, one of a half-dozen outstanding contemporary Old Testament scholars, delivered a series of lectures for a nontheological audience. At last these are published in English as *The Old Testament as Word of God* (Abingdon, 1959, \$2.75). The lucidity and candor of the discussion of legend, myth, history, inspiration, and revelation will be immediately appreciated by all serious Bible students.

In 1950 the Student Christian Movement Press of London inaugurated *Studies in Biblical Theology*, "designed to provide clergy and laymen with the best work in Biblical scholarship both in this country and abroad." In one decade twenty-eight titles have appeared, making available the work of scholars of established international repute and often of young scholars of merit who might otherwise have found no ready means for the publication of their works. The two latest releases are Brevard S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (No. 27) and Eduard Schweizer, *Lordship and Discipleship* (No. 28). The series is distributed in this country by Alec R. Allenson, Inc., Naperville, Illinois. G. Ernest

Wright, *The Rule of God* (Doubleday, 1960, \$2.95) brings together seven lectures based on biblical subjects but ranging widely in comment on their relevance for contemporary theology and churchmanship.

Appearing somewhat belatedly, Rudolph Bultmann's *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (Scribner, 1958, \$1.95) contains lectures delivered at various seminaries in the United States, including ours at Andover Newton. Here is a concise and lucid statement of the author's much-debated plea for "demythologizing" the New Testament. John Knox, *The Death of Christ* (Abingdon, 1958, \$2.75) explores helpfully the connection between Jesus' notion of his death and the views of the first believers. It is distinguished by Knox's long-standing emphasis upon "the Christ event." His rejection of all the customary categories of Jesus' self-consciousness (messiah, Suffering Servant, heavenly Son of man) in tentative favor of a prophetic son of man self-understanding (in Ezekiel's sense) will be of particular interest.

Jakob Jocz, a Hebrew Christian, has written a notable and much-needed book, *A Theology of Election. Israel and the Church* (Macmillan, 1959, \$5). Steeped in biblical learning, Jocz nevertheless orients his study around basic contemporary questions: What is the role of the Jewish member of the Christian church? What have the church and synagogue to say to one another? In this day of bland brotherliness and undercover anti-Semitism, this is an important book for Christian leaders.

E. Clinton Gardner, *Biblical Faith and Social Ethics* (Harper, 1960, \$5) succeeds convincingly in summarizing the ethical teaching of the Bible as "radical monotheism" which views "God as active in all events." The book has a commendable biblico-ethical cohesiveness. The omission of any significant references to the central contemporary problem in social ethics—war and international political order—is difficult to understand.

### THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

After thirteen years the first flush of sensationalism and enthusiasm over the Dead Sea Scrolls has waned; but with many texts still untranslated and unpublished and additional manuscripts appearing each year, these documents will be with us for decades to come. John M. Allegro, *The People of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Text and Picture* (Doubleday, 1958, \$5) is the best lay introduction to the scrolls and the Qumran community. With almost two hundred illustrations and full explanatory captions it tells the entire story. Among the general introductions, J. van der



Ploeg, *The Excavations at Qumran* (Longmans, 1958, \$4) concentrates on the history of the sect and Géza Vermès, *Discovery in the Judean Desert* (Desclee, 1956, \$5) supplies critically-annotated translations of the chief texts. The Israeli archaeologist Yigael Yadin, *The Message of the Scrolls* (Simon and Schuster, 1957, \$3.95) has worked on two of the major texts and vividly reports the work of his father-in-law, E. L. Sukenik, who first recognized the antiquity and significance of the Scrolls.

Frank M. Cross, Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (Doubleday, 1958, \$4.50) stresses the importance of the scrolls for textual and historical criticism. Millar Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Viking, 1958, \$6.50) supplements the author's earlier volume, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, and similarly includes comprehensive analysis and criticism of scholarly interpretations of the scrolls. It is especially valuable in making the foreign language literature available.

To date the most satisfactory volume on the relation of the scrolls to early Christianity is the collection of articles *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, ed. Krister Stendahl (Harper, 1957, \$4). The contributions by Karl G. Kuhn, Bo Reicke and W. D. Davies are of particular merit.

Now appearing in the United States is a valuable series, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* (J. van der Ploeg, general editor; Eerdmans), which will have chief, though not exclusive, value for specialists. The series will provide critical translations of the texts. Two volumes have been published: *The Manual of Discipline*, translation and commentary by R. Wernberg-Moller (1957, \$6) and *Le Rouleau de la Guerre*, translation and commentary by van der Ploeg (1959, \$7).

Nothing need be added except to say this: Before frustration sets in, get hold of a half-dozen of the above books and start reading!

## BOOK REVIEW

*African Nationalism*, by Ndabaningi Sithole (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1959. \$3.25).

The "African Nationalism" with which the book deals is not a jingoistic emotional patriotism stirred up among the masses of Africa by some young self-centered psychopathic leaders; it is the spirit of the African people coming alive and making them aware of themselves as human beings with just rights and a rich heritage of their own; it is the growing realization on the part of Africans of who they are, and the growing determination to be who they are. As such it is the same spirit that in generations past brought the nations of the West into being and moved them to heights of creative freedom.

The power that stands in the way of the African as he seeks to express this spirit of nationalism is white domination. A century ago white men put themselves in control of the continent of Africa, used the land and resources as they saw fit, and exerted authority over the people, dealing with them as they chose. Out of past history white men have gained attitudes toward the Africans and outlooks as to the way the Africans must be managed. And for a time the African people accepted the overlordship of the whites, because in their eyes that was the role in which the whites belonged. But now, on the one hand white men have destroyed the image the Africans had of them, and on the other the Africans have rediscovered their own inner resources of freedom and power. White domination must come to an end.

The author traces in swift, bold strokes the story of the past. In this he is remarkably objective and accurate. He states the disabilities under which the Africans have been put, dealing with country after country in his description. He lists the benefits that have come to the Africans through the work of the colonial powers, and he expresses sincere gratitude for all that has been done by government officials and Christian missionaries. But he is quite certain that gratitude for blessings conferred does not involve an obligation to put up with racial disabilities. He makes it clear that the African intends to gain his freedom, the right to be responsible for his affairs, and the place of control in his own land. This does not mean that all white men must leave the African continent, but it does mean that every trace of white supremacy in attitude and action must go. The African hopes that the white man will stay; that together they may work out a pattern of living that will enrich all men; but he outlines some of the disabilities of

vision and attitude which may keep the whites from entering constructively in such a joint enterprise. Whether the whites join him or not, the African intends to become the full citizen of his own land. African nationalism sees its aim as clearly as that.

But are the Africans ready for their freedom and able to manage themselves responsibly? The answer lies in the history of the people; in the structure of life which was theirs before the white man broke it up. Then, government was responsive to the wishes of the people, and society rested on freedom and justice. That such was the case is evidenced by language, by tradition, and by the uneasiness of the people when their freedom is denied them. The Africans knew freedom, and managed themselves in it; they can do so again. And if it be said that, when they managed themselves, there was much of warfare and struggle among them, Jesus' words about judging others and the old adage of the pot calling the kettle names rise up in reply.

There was no excuse for the subjugation of the Africans by the whites, and there is not any reason to perpetuate that subjugation, either directly or indirectly, openly or with subtle indirectness. The Africans do not intend to continue longer in the position into which they have been forced by the white men. The spirit of African nationalism, having come alive, must express itself in an ordered life of freedom and honor.

Mr. Sithole is one of Africa's younger leaders. He has written plainly, straightforwardly and in trust that his words will be heard. There are no signs of overt antagonism, or biting criticism, or fawning politeness in the book. He has stated the case for Africa; and there can be no question that he speaks for multitudes of his people. His work should be read carefully and thoughtfully by all who have any interest in Africa. There is no use dismissing the case he makes as so much idealistic talk, nor is there anything to be gained in arguing or condemning or defending. There is the task of working out with Africa an harmonious, constructive path into the future.

—J. LESLIE DUNSTAN

*Lecturers for the 1960 Fall Convocation*

*October 19, 1960*

***Greene Lecturer***

ROBERT L. CALHOUN

*Pitkin Professor of Historical Theology  
Yale Divinity School  
New Haven, Connecticut*

***English Lecturer***

J. WALLACE HAMILTON

*Minister, Pasadena Community Church  
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